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even less, the whole burden is discharged. As for any thought of not returning again to his sins, nothing is further from the penitent; he goes into them at once, reflecting thereupon that he must, and will, return again to confession. Such is his practice, and when he has again received absolution, of course, he is once more in good order. True, absolution, by degrees, becomes harder and harder, until, at length, on account of some gross habitual sin, it is quite refused. But the ways of obtaining the benefit again are numerous; and, in the very worst possible case, there remains, at least, the death-bed, where it cannot be denied. Such, then, are too many confessions, producing not only no beneficial effects, but spreading through wide circles most palpable corruption. What is an act of contrition good for, which is begun, continued, and ended in an hour, or even in a shorter time? The whole process involves an utter misconception of the nature of repentance. And, then, how utterly superficial the theology which regards the justification desired or obtained as consisting wholly in priestly absolution, and not at all in the state of the soul or its renewal; and which thus decides the question! How heathenish! To make reconciliation with God consist in mere external acts! How repugnant to all ideas of true repentance, when it is planned beforehand as to the time, the day, the place, and the priest when, where, and from whom the pardon may be obtained! So, then, life goes on, and such confessions are repeated over and over again. Sin, never conquered, becomes a terrible force; and, in spite of all sacraments, the soul sinks deeper and deeper. These real evils merit the earnest attention of the Church. All that has been attempted hitherto in religious education to remedy them has merely demonstrated its impotence; and we naturally conclude that there must be something else at the bottom of the difficulty besides a bare misconception. It appears to me, that the frequency, and the more or less perfunctory character of confession, diminishes the reality of the act; and it seems likely, that if confession were rather restricted to that state of the soul in which it is dogmatically requisite its true significance would become more apparent as an act of thorough reformation of life. It would then be sought by the sinner, not under the influence of custom and habit, but as a refuge in the crisis of his soul. As it is at present, the sight of a general rush, saints and sinners together, at stated seasons, to a periodical and matter-of-course confession, is enough to produce the conviction, that it is regarded as by no means an institution which requires of the sinner a genuine conversion, decisive for the whole course of his life, but only as a convenient routine for the enumeration of one's evil works, in order to be discharged of them.

"Another circumstance which encourages the erroneous impressions of which we are speaking is the exaggerated value given by many confessors (and chiefly by new-fangled young ones) to the most minute specification of sins; in consequence of which many a penitent, before and during his confession, is tortured with the most lively apprehensions, lest he should possibly suffer something to be forgotten; while the confessor, for his part, inquires with scrupulous anxiety into all the details of omission and commission.

"Thus the whole attention of the people is directed to the bare numbering of their faults, and the great end of conversion is left out of sight; the former appearing to be the essential and only condition of pardon; since it is for that alone that many confessors give themselves so much trouble. If it be a question, whether it be profitable, or whether it can be in conformity with the intention of the Church, thus to make the confessional a court of inquisition, and so to imprint upon it a repulsive and odious character; the conclusion will not be difficult, if we take the opinion of those who are unbiased by any partisan theories, and who have had wide experience, and opportunities for closely observing the awkwardness, paltriness, gross indecency, and prying impertinence of our modern inquisitorial father confessors.—(pp. 201—6).

"Another deep-rooted evil which I find in the Church is involved in the administration of death-bed sacraments. It is an universal and great matter of concern with the faithful simply that nobody should depart this life without having partaken of the last sacraments; and, therefore, sudden death is regarded by them as a terrible calamity. You say—well, ought it not so to be? Ought not the dying thus earnestly to long for the holy sacraments, and to depart with their succours and consolations? No doubt. I surely would not have it otherwise. It is, so far, right and good. But it is not good that on this account there should be a diminution of that earnestness with which the whole of life should be directed to a happy end, or of that penitence which should be made the business of earlier years, and of days of health and strength. Ah! when the idea is so prevalent, that if a sinner can only have the benefit of confession and absolution before his dissolution he may depart in peace, what motive is there for him to maintain a life-long struggle against sin, or to break with it at forty, when he can be so easily discharged of the whole burthen at eighty, upon the bed of death? There is, indeed, no doubt that thousands, who have thus thrown away their lives, receive, indeed, the sacraments in their dying hours, but are far from deriving any help from them. Nobody knows at that awful hour what is going on in the soul; and the by-standers are consoled, and congratulate themselves that their dying friend yields up the ghost in the

enjoyment of all the means of grace—that is to say, with the succours of absolution! Now, while it would be improper to give up a sinner even upon his death-bed, or to say that his contrition will be of no avail, it is yet impossible not to feel a shudder, when one sees an importance attached to the reception of death-bed sacraments, which alike relieves the young and the mature from any concern about repentance, and entirely deprives them of just ideas of the real work of life. For, what serious ideas can a man have about his repentance who persuades himself that he can attend to that business in the last moments of life, when all the powers of intelligence so generally fail, and when, at all events, there is so little probability of his experiencing a genuine conversion? Besides the death-bed sacraments, what even more generally betrays the people into a false consolation as to the state of the departed is the whole business of masses for the dead. Whatever may yet be pressing upon the departed soul may, in the opinion of the common people, be entirely removed by these sacrifices. If not, what are they for? They must, these poor folk argue, be of some advantage to the dead; and, of course, they buy off a portion of those sins, which they committed in their lifetime, and left undischarged. How happy, then, is the man who only dies rich, and who can buy any number of masses, or found them in perpetuity! Riches are thus made an eternal possession, and the advantages of the *mill onairs* over the unhappy pauper extended through all eternity! That these things are a gross mistake and a practical mischief, nobody can deny; and yet the clergy find these masses such a vast profit to their purse! I am not complaining of prayers for the departed—at any rate, of the invoking in their behalf of the sacrifice of Christ; but one must be allowed to express his indignation, when he sees the people losing sight of the earnest work of life, and abandoning themselves to a false security; and when he knows that they are encouraged in these fatal delusions by the personal interests of their pastors.

"A further practical and deeply-seated evil to which the attention of the Church must be directed is the idea entertained by the popular mind concerning indulgences. Say what you will, there it remains. The people understand by indulgence, the remission of sins. Explain to them that not the sins, but only the penalties of sin, are affected by indulgences. Very well. It is the penalty, and not the guilt of sin, which the people regard as the important thing; and whatever frees them from the punishment of sin frees them, so far as they care about it, from sin itself. The penalty is what they are afraid of. The indulgence, therefore, is the thing for them. It bears the highest value in their estimate; and conversion—earnest conversion—the true conversion, with its efforts towards a progressive moral purification—this looks but mean in comparison, when they suppose they can easily relieve themselves of all the consequences of sin by another way. To this it is answered, that indulgences, so far from doing any damage to the repentance of the sinner; on the contrary, rather encourage repentance, inasmuch as to acquire a plenary indulgence, a worthy partaking of the sacraments of penance and of the altar is always exacted as the condition. But, on the other hand, I reply, that nevertheless, repentance is still no gainer, seeing that the reception of the sacrament of penance, amounting to nothing more than a performance at a set time of a formal confession, is far from synonymous, in the popular apprehension, with the undertaking of a thorough reform. Besides, the indulgence is never conceded as consequent to the sacrament of confession, but always as connected with some specified work; so that, in any case, these works occupy the foreground, while the sacrament is cast into the shade. It is true that the sacrament must be worthily received, no doubt; but that gets a man no indulgence; the indulgence is wholly dependent upon something else. So it is; and hence may be imagined how gross and deeply pernicious is such a manifest corruption of the institution in question. But this is not all. Hence it follows, in the opinion of the common folk, that larger indulgences may be had in certain places, or on certain feasts, and, accordingly, these places and festivals are sought out and observed by innumerable swarms of the populace. Here, again, no account is made of the sacrament; the indulgence appears to depend entirely on the place and the day. And when, on these festivals, and in such places, the most splendid festivities are celebrated, and graces are poured forth in streams, how is the poor man of the commonalty to suppose that all this is nothing, and helps him not at all, without repentance and reformation? If so, what is the use of all this pomp? In that case, better stay at home and bewail one's guilt in the secret chamber: it would help one more! Yes, indeed, to remain in the house, and in honest silence to labour for moral perfection, that were far better. In fact, the greater the glorification of indulgences, and the more pompous the solemnities connected with them, so much the more will it be impossible for the masses to imagine that no greater benefits are thereby imparted, or that, even here, they may not be partaker of them, by the performance of no very severe obligations.

"But while the lower classes are in this way tempted into the most pernicious delusions, the more enlightened make themselves merry with the whole matter. When the witting beholds any quantity of *plenary* indulgences set forth, he inquires whether one plenary should not be enough, or

whether it be possible to remit still more than everything! When he sees, besides the plenaries, a store of *non-plenary* indulgences, he interrogates what may be the advantage of these latter as appendages to the former. When he reads that with this or that devotion one may acquire a hundred days' indulgence, he reckons up how much that would amount to, if one should go through with it every day for ten years, and so on.

"Having myself spoken a word for indulgences in one of my works, I cannot be supposed an enemy of the institution. Yet I cannot conceal from myself the soul-destroying consequences involved in those erroneous conceptions of their nature, which are in vogue among the people, though not by the fault of the people. The whole matter deserves most earnest consideration."

We would gladly extend our extracts from this valuable and truly excellent work, but we are unable to do so in our present number. Dr. Hirscher, while he does not shrink from charging some of his order with a direct traffic in the fatal delusions of the people, does it evidently in sorrow rather than in anger, and the unction and fervour of his expostulations are so truly touching that no one can doubt either the sincerity or benevolence of his convictions. He has been, we think, not inaptly denominated the *modern Fenelon*, and we hope, at no distant period, to return to him again.

#### LIGHT SHINING IN DARKNESS.—No. I.

IN the twilight and the dawn there seems like the mingling of the light and the darkness; it is felt like a conflict by one who strives to continue reading in the gloom; in a total eclipse of the sun, there is a striving of the light; a faint red moon still strives to shine in her darkest eclipse; but these are transitive and temporary. God has divided the light from the darkness (Genesis i. 4); night and day succeed one another, not by a fixed line of boundary, but by failing and increase. In all nature there is no such thing as "light shining in darkness." Artificial light alone, such as the lighthouse at sea, or the lantern at night, gives us any idea of what is meant by the figure of "light shining in darkness."

Yet, this is the figure which the Scripture uses in various forms, to express the light of divine truth shining on the darkness of the heart of fallen man; showing, as it were, that though the world was cursed for the sin of man, yet man's heart is more disordered by sin than the course of nature by the curse.

But in the moral and religious world, it seems our natural tendency to expect that all should be light or that all should be darkness; or that darkness should wholly overcome the light, or light the darkness, just as in the natural world. This is the consequence of not knowing ourselves. It obscures our understanding of the Scriptures, and prevents our seeing facts in the history of the Church. We should seek light in the Word of God first, and then we shall see light in his dealings with the Church; for, "in thy light shall we see light" (Psalm 86, 9).

We have taken the title of this article from what St. Peter says of the writings of the Prophets:—"We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts" (2 Peter, i. 19).

St. Peter does not say that prophecy was "a light in a dark place" to the Jewish Church and people, under the old dispensation. No; he holds it up as such to Christian converts and the Christian Church in its own day—"whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place."

It was so with Christ Himself:—"The life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not" (John i. 5). In the natural world, when the sun riseth in his strength the darkness must flee away; for God has divided the light from the darkness; and the works of God are subject to his laws. But though Christ be the Sun of Righteousness, who rises with healing in His wings (Malachi iv. 2), yet the moral evil of man's heart does not always flee away before that light. Multitudes who heard His words and saw His works did not believe on Him. And so He said Himself: "This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved" (John iii. 19, 20). The light, indeed, was shining, but in darkness which comprehended it not.

If this were so, when the Sun of Righteousness Himself was risen, and Christ Himself was speaking and teaching on the earth among the chosen people, we must not be surprised if, more or less, it should be ever so in His Church on earth; for the Church is not greater than her Lord.

Yet, if we do not now see darkness totally dispelled by light in the church, we are apt to doubt like Gideon, "if God be for us, why then is all this befallen us, and where be all His miracles that our fathers told us of?" (Judges vi. 13). We are apt to suppose that *there was a time* when darkness was wholly dispelled by light in the Church; we are apt to think there was another time perhaps (at least many Protestants do), when light was

wholly extinguished in darkness, and then we mourn as if the glory had departed from Israel.

First and last, we are wrong in this. Beginning with Christ Himself, proceeding with the Apostles, following down the history of the Church into the seeming gloom of what is called "the dark ages," first and last, *this light hath been shining in darkness*. And so we believe it must ever be till Christ shall come again to judgment, to separate the wicked and the just. Therefore we are not discouraged at seeing darkness in the visible Church, as though the Word of God were of none effect; but believing as we do in the perpetuity of the Church of Christ, we look the more earnestly through the gloom to see "light shining in darkness."

This subject has been brought forcibly to our thoughts by the extracts we printed in the last number of our journal from Gratian's Treatise on "Penitence." Protestants think the Church of the Twelfth Century was altogether sunk in darkness. The labour which our undertaking requires makes us think that Protestants are wrong. "The dark ages" are to us ages in which truth, not yet extinguished, maintained a glorious conflict with the powers of darkness.

Difficulties there are, no doubt, in proving this. The records of those ages, such as we have them, were afterwards preserved or destroyed in monasteries established in the interests of Rome, where alone there was the learning, or the means to preserve them. Records were preserved or destroyed according to their value, or their interest, in the eyes of monks of later ages. The records of the Council of Constantinople, under Archbishop Photius, have perished wholly; because the monks of Rome had no interest in preserving them, and Rome had given orders to destroy them. Innumerable written records, most essential to our purpose, have thus perished, under orders given from Rome to destroy them. The writings of those whom they called heretics were generally ordered to be burned. Hence it comes to pass that we often know of resistance to Romish error only by the record of the punishment inflicted by the vengeance of Rome on some noted leaders, to terrify the rest; when all other records of that resistance, and of its origin and its extent, have been destroyed.

We ought not to be surprised at this; for it is the tendency of all uninspired history to give a partial view of the real interests of human life. Historians select battles and crimes to record; the private industry and virtue which constitute the life and strength of nations is untold. Historians of a party relate the crimes of their enemies, but not their own. The accounts of the victors are preserved, those of the vanquished lost, as with the Romans and Carthaginians. Thus history often produces false impressions, which true philosophy alone can see through. These causes operate in church history more, perhaps, than in any other; partly from inherent causes, but chiefly from the fact that church records have generally passed through the hands of one party. Thus the inner life of the Church is unrecorded, or its evidence suppressed. Yet materials still exist sufficient to satisfy all reflecting minds that the light was shining, indeed, even in those ages which the unreflecting now suppose to have been the most utterly dark; and that oftentimes the most vigorous strivings for light took place in what seems to us now the deepest gloom.

We think that the statement we have published from Gratian's Treatise on Penitence, in our article on "Confession" in our last number, affords a striking instance of "Light shining in darkness." That in the Twelfth Century the freeness and sufficiency of forgiveness by grace should still have had an equal place in the teaching of the Church, and in the canon law itself, is a fact that has probably taken both Roman Catholics and Protestants by surprise.

We give here another extract from that treatise, for which we had not room in our last article.

"De Penitentia Dist. 1, c. 34.  
If therefore none will confess, unless he be risen again [that is, spiritually], but none *lives* [spiritually] as the child of eternal fire, and worthy of everlasting damnation, it is clear that before any can confess his sin he is absolved by the grace of internal compunction from the guilt of his transgression, by which eternal punishments were due to him. Also; if before that each can confess he is raised up again by the Lord, he either *lives, risen again, while he confesses*, or after his resurrection he is dead again, and confesses. But as the dead [in trespasses and sins] before he is raised again could not confess, so after resurrection he cannot confess, being dead. It remains, therefore, that he lives, risen again, while he confesses his sin. He has, therefore, Him who raised him up present to him, and dwelling in him.

"Whence Augustine says on Psalm 70, c. 35:—

"He who is raised up in the body lives, while he who raised him up is absent; but it is not so with him who is raised up in soul.

"For since God is the life of the soul, but the soul is the life of the body, as the body cannot live when the soul is absent, just so the soul cannot live but where God is present. Therefore, the soul has God present to herself by grace, by which living she confesses her sin, and the life, which is God, inhabits her whom He makes to live by dwelling in her. But if He dwells in her, she who comes to the light, the sight of which makes darkness flee, is

therefore become the temple of the Holy Spirit, is therefore illuminated, is therefore cleansed from the darkness of sin, has therefore ceased to be the temple of the Devil. For, as the apostle says, there is no agreement between Christ and Belial, no participation between light and darkness, no communication between righteousness and wickedness, no agreement between the temple of God and idols."—2 Cor. vi. 16.

We think this one of the noblest arguments for the free forgiveness of the Prodigal by his Heavenly Father, and the ablest confutation of forgiveness by the priest, that we have anywhere met with.

And be it remembered for ever that these doctrines, taken from St. Augustine, were still taught by so many, so wise, and so religious men in the Church that they yet held an open and an equal place in the canon law of Rome herself in the Twelfth Century.

The object of this paper is to call attention to the necessity of seeking to recover the evidence of "Light shining in darkness" in all ages; and to ask our learned friends to give us contributions to help us to make it manifest.

We think the object of such papers should be to show:—

1. The preaching of the gospel of the grace of God, in times supposed to have been darkest.
2. That this was not a new light breaking in, but the maintenance of an old light.
3. That this light still continued to struggle in the darkest gloom, and never was wholly quenched.

We ask our contributors to bear in mind what we have said of the *ex parte* character of the evidence which has been preserved, and the necessity of carefully observing indications not apparent at first sight. We have already published accounts of Savonarola, Arnold De Brescia, and others, whose history throws light on the subject. Let it be observed how often the accounts we have of such men have been preserved by those who wished to hold them up as examples to strike terror: let it be considered what evidence this fact itself affords, that there must have been multitudes then who held their opinions, although we learn it now only by the indirect evidence of the necessity which then existed for creating terror.

We trust by means of a series of such articles upon "Light shining in darkness" to be able to place the true history of the Church itself, and of the great conflict between truth and error, in a new and striking light.

#### SAINT COLMAN AND MR. WILBERFORCE.

It appears much to be regretted that so few Irishmen, even of those who have leisure and taste for such studies, should be familiar with the ancient history of their Church and nation. We would not exaggerate the importance of such researches. We know how difficult it often is for the inexperienced to disentangle the germ of truth from the coil of fiction with which it has been enveloped, and to distinguish what may be, after all, but a monkish fable from a historical fact, and we believe that in all vexed questions of religion the final appeal must ever be, not to the opinions or practices of the ancient Irish Church, but to the sure testimony of God's written Word; still, the testimony of Irish history is not without its value, and we cannot but think that many an Irishman, who by some strange infatuation rejects the clear testimony of the Douay Bible, might be awakened at least to inquire into the principles of the system in which he has been brought up, if only he would allow himself to consider fairly some plain, incontrovertible facts in the past history of the Irish Church. Oftentimes the old monastic record and even the ruined abbey, after a manner, unites with Holy Scripture in bearing a powerful testimony against the pretensions of the Church of Rome. We desire on the present occasion to draw the attention of our readers to a few facts in the history of an island off the west coast of Ireland, which, though now but little known, is not without associations of interest both in ancient and modern times.

Any one who has travelled in the wilds of Connemara, along the interesting coast road from Clifden to the Killeries, must have observed on his left hand a number of islands of various sizes and forms studding the margin of the vast Atlantic. Among these he may not, improbably, have had pointed out to him Innisboffin (or the

\* Si ergo nulla confitebitur, nisi resuscitatus, nemo autem vivit æternæ Glærie filius, et perpetua damnatione dignus, patet, quod antequam quisque confiteatur peccatum, a reatu suæ prevaricationis, quo æternis sibi debentur supplicia, per gratiam internæ compunctionis absolvitur. Item: si antequam quisque confiteatur, a Domino resuscitatur, vel resuscitatus vivit dum confitetur, vel post resurrectionem iterum mortuus est et confitetur. Sed sicut antequam resuscitaretur mortuus, confiteri non poterat, sic post resurrectionem mortuus confiteri non valet. Restat ergo ut resuscitatus vivat, dum peccatum confitetur. Habet itaque suscitatore suum sibi præsentem, sequæ inhabitantem.

Unde Augustinus ait, in Pa. 70.

Resuscitatus corpore vivit absente suscitatore. Non autem sic resuscitatus in anima.

Quum enim Deus sit vita animæ, anima vero vita corporis, sicut corpus vivere non potest absente anima, ita non nisi Deo præsentem anima vivere valet. Habet itaque anima sibi Deum præsentem per gratiam, qua vivens peccatum suum confitetur, eamque vita, qua Deus est, inhabitat, quam inhabitando vivere facit. Si autem illam inhabitat, ergo templum spiritus sancti facta est, ergo illuminata est, ergo a tenebris peccatorum exolata est, ergo templum diaboli esse desinit, quæ ad lucem venit, cuius respectus tenebras fugat. Nulla enim (ut ait apostolus) conventio Christi ad Belial, nulla participatio lucis ad tenebras, nulla communicatio iustitiæ et iniquitatis, nullus consensus templo Dei cum idollis.

island of the white cow), about six miles distant from the mainland at the nearest point. It is about three miles in length and two in breadth, and contains somewhat less than one thousand inhabitants, all of whom speak the Irish language. It has received its name from a legend of an enchanted white cow, which, as some believe, is still seen periodically emerging from a lake upon the island. It was celebrated in the seventh century as the residence of Saint Colman, when he resigned the see of Lindisfarne, after the Synod of Whitby, A.D. 664, who founded an abbey there, the ruins of which still exist. From the seventh century to the seventeenth the island was little known beyond the neighbouring shores; but during the latter eventful period it was considered of importance by the then contending parties in Ireland, and alternately fortified by them. On the 14th February, 1652, it was surrendered to the parliamentary forces, and justice compels us to admit that the rulers of Ireland at this time seem to have felt more interest in the spiritual welfare of the inhabitants of this remote isle than any of those who either followed or preceded them. At least, we find in the "Original Council Book in Dublin Castle" an order passed on the 12th June, 1656, "that it shall be taken into consideration to send an able, pious, and orthodox minister of the Gospel to be settled at Bofin, to be paid by the company." These good intentions, however, were never carried into effect, and the poor islanders continued in a state of almost heathen darkness until, in the year 1832, a society was formed, called "the Ladies' Irish Island Association," for the purpose of spreading the knowledge of the Scriptures among the numerous neglected islands off the coast of Ireland. This society for many years employed a Scripture-reader and schoolmaster on the island, who were well received and kindly treated by the inhabitants. Innisboffin, we understand, was purchased about three years ago by the late Archdeacon Wilberforce, and is now the property of his brother, Mr. Henry Wilberforce, once a clergyman of the Church of England, and latterly well known in Ireland as the secretary of the so-called Catholic Defence Association. This gentleman, the son of that noble Christian philanthropist who laboured so earnestly and perseveringly for the abolition of the African slave trade, has not seconded the efforts of the "Island and Coast Society" to impart to his tenantry that liberty which the knowledge of divine truth confers. Shortly after he became proprietor of Innisboffin, steps were taken to have the missionary agents, a Scripture-reader and schoolmaster, removed from the island. We will not now dwell upon the strange ideas about liberty which some men seem to hold, who always speak of themselves as a most oppressed and persecuted race; but it certainly appears to us, that for a landlord, on purchasing a property, to eject from it well conducted tenants, with their wives and children, who regularly paid their rent, for no other reason than that they differed from him in their religious opinions, and sought, by every fair means, to propagate what they believed to be the truth, would be considered by most persons the very extreme of intolerance. We hope the inhabitants of Innisboffin may be prosperous and happy under the rule of Mr. Wilberforce; but during the past year the island has acquired a somewhat unenviable notoriety, in consequence of a riot which took place in September last year, when some clergymen and ladies were visiting the place, and for taking part in which three of the inhabitants were tried at the last Mayo assizes, found guilty, and sentenced to three months' imprisonment, with hard labour. Innisboffin, then, is now what many would consider a most highly favoured spot. The zealous proprietor has, by virtue of his power as landlord, expelled from it all readers and teachers of holy Scripture; and the no less zealous inhabitants, instead of confuting the arguments of their devoted instructors, have shown the orthodoxy of their faith and their Christian patience by replying to them as the Jews did to those of St. Stephen, with stones and blows. Whether the conduct of the proprietor and inhabitants of the island be in accordance with the spirit of holy Scripture, we leave for others to decide. We desire now only to take up the inquiry, is the religion now dominant at Innisboffin the same as that established there by St. Colman 1190 years ago.

Colman was a celebrated Irishman, at a time when Ireland was famous for the learning and piety of her sons. He was one of those successors of St. Columba, of whom the venerable Bede writes that they were "renowned for their continency, their love of God, and strict observance of monastic rules. It is true they followed uncertain rules in their observance of the great festival, as having none to bring them the synodal decrees for the observance of Easter, by reason of their being so far away from the rest of the world; wherefore, they only practised such works of piety and charity as they could learn from the prophetic, evangelical, and apostolical writings."—Bede, Ec. His. b. 3, c. 4. In other words, they made Scripture their rule of faith, and were independent of any foreign jurisdiction.

Colman was eminent, not only for his personal character and piety, but for the high position he occupied in the Church. He was not only Bishop and Abbot of Lindis-

\* See Hardiman's edition of O'Flaherty's *Iar* ('Connaught'—pp. 115, and seq. also p. 394. Mr. Hardiman refers for further information respecting the island and the antiquities of the Co. Mayo to "Genealogies, Tribes, and Customs of Hy-Fiachraib," printed for the Irish Archaeological Society, A.D. 1844.